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A RARE LITHUANIAN GRAŠIS

By Zenonas Pažarauskas

From *Koleckija* #7, 1999

Translated by Algirdas Kepalas

The Prague groschen struck in Bohemia spread widely in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania during the 14-15th centuries. Coins of Wenceslas II (1283-1305) and of John of Luxemburg (1310-1346) were from silver of high fineness (.900 to .930). Such coins were in high demand and were reliable money in trade. Later, rulers of Bohemia started spoiling the Prague groschen while reducing the amount of bullion in them. Such groschen flooded Lithuania, and it became clear that their further circulation was doomed. As the economic and political situation changed, it became necessary to introduce a monetary reform. The first grašiai struck in Vilnius appeared in Lithuania in the 16th century.

Coins struck in the time of Sigismund August were different from grašiai of Alexander and Sigismund the Old because they showed the portrait of the ruler of Lithuania. The standard of grašiai of Sigismund August was either Lithuanian (23.5--25.5 mm. diameter, 2.52--2.54 gr.) or Polish (21--23 mm. diameter, 2.05 gr.).

The first grašiai of Sigismund August of 1545 are great rarities. It is difficult to explain the circumstances of striking 1545 coins even after penetrating known historical facts. There is information that through the efforts of Sigismund August the Vilnius Mint was opened on October 11, 1545. But the organization of the Mint still took another one and a half months.

The first contracts with the engravers of the coin dies were signed on December 1. At first there were three engravers at the Mint: Melchioras, his aide Valentius Frankas, and Martynas Vartenbergas (M. Gumowski, Mennica Wilenska, Warsaw 1921, p. 50). Even working very intensively they could



ABOVE: "No Poland" 1 Grašis, 1545

not engrave 25 pairs of dies, polish and harden them and finish other preparatory tasks during such a short time.

It is known that they had struck 19 different varieties (some of rather high mintages) of half-grašiai and 6 varieties of very low mintage 1 grašis coins.

This stage of initial activity of the Vilnius Mint is very problematic. It requires very careful research. There arise no doubts that preparatory works for striking and engraving of dies were started already before the contracts were signed with the engravers. Zenonas Dukša maintains that only few museums possess 1545 grašiai.¹ These are the Hermitage, the National of Cracow, the National of Warsaw, Historical Treasures of the Ukraine, the National of Lithuania, and the Science of Lithuania. These arguments of the researcher are significant because Polish researchers of numismatics of the first half of the 19th century K. V. Stežinskis-Bandtė² and Ignas Zagurskis³ did

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not even know that such coins were struck. Later, researchers K. Stronczynski, E. Hutten-Czapski, and even M. Gumowski show information not only about the coin itself, but even about its varieties. Even then one of these coins was unusually rare. Only E. Hutten-Czapski and P. Potocki⁴ had it in their collections. E. Hutten-Czapski's coin was lighter than P. Potocki's (1.79 gr.--2.54 gr.).⁵ All 1545 coins described in Hutten-Czapski's catalog, except #7121, had an R-8 rarity rating.

In his catalogue, J. Tiškevičius gave an R-8 rarity rating to the Lithuanian coin, too.

Our modern day most eminent researcher of Lithuanian coins (and of Polish) E. Kopicki described five different 1545 1 grašis coins of Sigismund August in his latest catalogue. Items once belonging to E. Hutten-Czapski and P. Potocki were given the rarity degrees of unique, the other four items R-8.

The compilers of the numismatic catalog of S. Sajauskas and D. Kaubrys described 6 different 1545 1 grašis coins. Our unique coin is presented as a trial coin and all other coins are marked as R-7. Among 5 described coins is one which basically is different from all others (diameter 24.5 mm., 2.3020 gr. silver).⁶

The legends of this coin are: Obverse: "SIGISMVN * AVG * REX * M * D * L +", Reverse: "* MONETA * MAG * D * LITVANI."

Translation: Obverse: "Sigismund August, King, Grand Duke of Lithuania." Notice that the obverse does not show the word "Poland." Reverse: Coin of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania."

Only this single 1545 1 grašis struck at the Vilnius Mint bears this legend.

This coin was found in Estonia, in one of the hoards of Tallinn. It belonged to a collector of Tallinn, Johannes Kasper. Around 1968 it came to Lithuania, and now is in the collection of a collector in Vilnius.

Some time later a friend of Lithuanian numismatics, Frank Passic visited Vilnius. He is president of the Lithuanian Numismatic Association of America which publishes the newspaper *The Knight*. F. Passic kept company with the numismatists of Vilnius and he was shown the until then unknown aforementioned grašis. The coin aroused the interest of the American. The



author of these lines took a picture of the coin, briefly described it and mailed the material to *The Knight*. In 1985 *The Knight* published the article of F. Passic "1545 No-Poland 1 Grašis."⁷ Therein the grašis was not only described, but an excursus was made into the period of the rule of Sigismund August and the life in Vilnius. It was attempted to answer the basic question: Why exactly was such a coin minted?

Frank Passic raised a question: "Perhaps when he was preparing trial coins for "new" operations of striking coins in Vilnius, the moneyer prepared such a specimen as the first version, keeping in mind all the legalities (of government positions), but without "Poland." It is quite understandable why Sigismund August wished to have his full title on the coins. Therefore this special variety did not exist long."

Together was given valuable information about the spread of the coin. The author writes that a second copy of the coin is known in Poland. Very important is the last sentence of this article, "Anyway, this unusual coin is purely Lithuanian, it is one of the most important in Lithuanian numismatics."

After this publication the coin attracted the attention of other researchers of numismatics. In his commentaries, professor of Vilnius University Mykolas Michelbertas drew attention to the reading of Latin legends.⁸ He presented two different Latin texts of the obverse: "Sigismundus Augustus Rex Magnus Dux

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NUMISMATIC EX LIBRIS

This past year the Bank of Lithuania held an exhibition of numismatic graphics. Most of these were drawings of coins found on personal library "Ex Libris" (from the library of) cards of Lithuanian collectors.

A numismatic library is a must for any serious student in the science of numismatics. In addition to the standard reference catalogs, there are specialty books, geography and history books, and other materials a collector may acquire through the years to supplement his collection. These books are used for research in the planning and assembling of exhibits, the writing of articles, and for researching the coins themselves.

Ex Libris cards were popular a couple of generations ago. These were pieces of paper that contained a personal design containing the name of the owner. These would be glued inside the front cover or front pages (or even the back in some cases) of each book the collector owned. This would signify ownership. Sometimes having a book with an "Ex Libris" from a significant collector would add pedigree and value to the book at an auction.

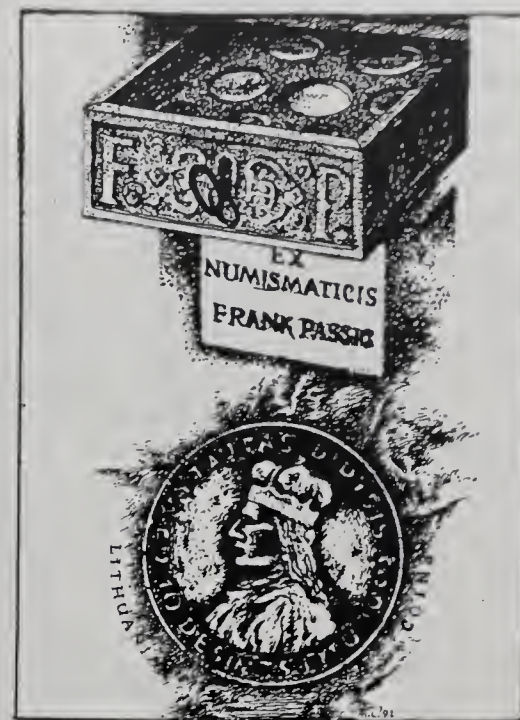
These Ex Libris would usually be designed by an artist and consist of black & white line drawings. More elaborate ones were printed using the lithograph method. Others have been printed in color. When a design was drawn by the artist, often a collector would go to a professional printer and have a quantity of these printed. Some would have adhesive added to the back, while others would add the adhesive themselves.

It was interesting to read the exhibition brochure and view the various Ex Libris that had been placed on display by the Bank of Lithuania. We'll try and feature this brochure in the future here in *The Knight*.

One surprise after seeing the brochure was an Ex Libris made for this Lithuanian collector! Several years ago noted Lithuanian numismatist Zenonas Dukša sent this author an original hand-drawn Ex Libris with my name on it. It was drawn in 1991 by Lithuanian artist Marius Luigaila. It measures 59 x 82 mm.

This month we feature this Ex Libris, illustrated above. On the top we see a coin cabinet drawer, showing holes where coins are placed. On the side in an ornate design are the initials "F. P." Below is stated, "Ex Numismaticis Frank Passic." Below is illustrated the obverse of the 1936 10 litų coin by Juozas Zikaras featuring Vytautas the Great, which appears on the cover page of *The Knight*. At the bottom around the coin is stated, "LITHUANIAN COINS." The designer's initials and the date, "M.L. '91" appears under the coin just to the right.

How many of our LNA members have had their own personal "Ex Libris" cards designed for their numismatic libraries? Are any of them Lithuanian in nature? If so, send us one so we can share it with our readers.



WANT/FOR SALE ADS

FOR SALE: 1999 50 Litų "Baltic Way" proof silver, plus 1 litas cupro-nickel UNC Baltic Way. Both coins \$25.00 postpaid. Harvey W. Oshrin, 2196 Opal Ridge, Vista, CA 92083.

FOR SALE: Book, "Klaipėda Curonian Spit in Old Postcards (1999) by Aleksandras Kubilas. Hard cover, in color. \$35.

Frank Passic, 900 S. Eaton St., Albion, MI 49224.

This issue concludes Volume 22 of The Knight. Our next issue will appear in the fall and will be dated September-October 2000.

Litvaniae,” and “Sigismundus Augustus Rex Magni Ducatus Lithuaniae.” I would like to point out that the rules of writing Latin legends on the coins at the time of Sigismund August were settled. On the obverse of the Lithuanian coins it was written: “MONETA * MAGNI * DVCATVS * LITVANIAE. (A Coin of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania).

Exceptions are some 3-grašiai, 4-grašiai, 1547 6-grašiai, and a portugalier. On them before the word “REX” were written two letters D(ei) G(ratia). The reverse had the inscription “MONETA * MAGNI * DVCATVS * LITVANIAE.”

But can be found other legends: At the beginning of the legend is shown the name of the coin, its value and metal. For instance, “III GROSS(us) AR(genteus) TRIP(lex) MAG(ni) DVCA(tus) LITVA(niae). Exceptions are the described unique coin and the satiric 3-grašiai. Other remarks of the professor are very important. He admits that the coin is unique and proposes to consider it a trial coin.

Zenonas Dukša has written an article “Rare Coins of the Vilnius Mint in Foreign and Lithuanian Museums.”⁹ The material published by F. Passic caught the interest of this numismatist. In his book he expressed similar thoughts,¹⁰ most importantly that the 1545 grašis is a very great rarity. Z. Dukša explains it this way: Perhaps the Poles were offended by the lack of the name of their country on the coin and had them destroyed, and therefore only several or only one remained. F. Passic has written similar views about the rarity of the coin.

Both of these numismatists assertions should be critically evaluated, for these coins were in circulation not only in all of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, but also beyond its borders. Poles were only a small percentage of the population in 16th century Lithuania, and could not practically carry out this destruction.

Being acquainted with the works of the above mentioned researchers, one can propose a version of the origin of the coin. This coin was struck because the status of Sigismund August as the ruler of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was not deliniated. It is known that he was declared Grand Duke of Lithuania in 1529, formally he became King in 1530, officially, in 1548. When he arrived in Vilnius in 1544 he thoroughly renewed the Vilnius Mint. It was reestablished in new headquarters on German Street, which were purchased by the country treasurer Jonas Hornostajus for 500 kapos of grašiai (30,000

grašiai). New modern equipment was purchased to strike coins and medals. Die engravers and other specialists were invited from Western Europe to the mint. Not all foreigners who came to Vilnius were acquainted with the confusing pyramid of rulers in Lithuania and Poland. They know that the King of Poland was Sigismund the Old and that the ruler of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was Sigismund August. Therefore dies of the first engraved grašis were prepared on the basis of these arguments. The first coins were placed into circulation. When the scandal arose or when the king interfered (understandably, it was the wish of Sigismund August to be King of Poland), new grašiai were struck in which the name of Poland was included.

S. Sajauskas and D. Kaubrys, the compilers of “Numizmatika” found out about this rare coin from the publications of the above mentioned researchers.¹¹ Later this coin was shown to both of the authors of the book. In their catalogue this rare coin is linked to the other four which have the rarity degree of R-7, as mentioned. Here this discussion could be stopped except for one detail. The compilers of the catalogue have published a price guide of the coins described in “Numizmatika.”¹² Our coin was appraised here, too. We get an impression that either the compilers of “Numizmatika” did not read the articles of the researchers or that their rating of unique items is distinctly different.

Their price list of the catalogue becomes analogous to the sadly notorious catalogue of V. Petrov. This businessman included the famous “Constantine ruble” in every new price list of his. although he never owned this rarity, he kept offering it to buy for a few thousand rubles. For curiosity’s sake attention could be drawn that in this businessman’s store at Tver Street in Moscow at the beginning of this century, rare Lithuanian coins were sold, among them “rarities” of Jozef Mainert and other counterfeiters already announced and described in the press. In his sales catalogue can be found not only 6-grašiai of 1547 and 1562, all known half-taler counterfeits, but also unknown Lithuanian unique items: golden half-ducats of 1565 and copies of the Portugalier of 1568.¹³

Let us hope that in the second, supplemented and corrected edition of “Numizmatika” catalogue the new unique item of 1545 will find its proper place and its evaluation and standard of rarity will not oppose the established tradition of Lithuanian numismatics.

FOOTNOTES ON PAGE 9.

BANK OF LITHUANIA EXPOSITION. MONEY OF RESTORED LITHUANIA 1990-2000 (Brochure).

5.

Translated by Algirdas Kepalas

The Exposition devoted to the 10 years of the founding of the Bank of Lithuania gives a survey of the history of the creation and production of national money 1990-2000 after Lithuania regained its independence: from the sketches and models created by the artists, to the printing plates and contemporary banknotes and coins.

Already before the restoration of independence preparations were made to introduce our own money. On December 14, 1989 it was announced a competition for the projects of litai and centai and a commission to evaluate the results was formed. In the competition participated artists Raimundas Miknevičius, Liudvikas Pocius, Giedrius Jonaitis, Alvydas Mandeika, Rimvydas Bartkus, Justas Tolvaišis, Rytis Valantinas, and others. The Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of Lithuania was to recommend which most important people, monuments of history and architecture should be perpetuated on the banknotes. A specialist of production of money from Australia, Kęstutis Lynikas sent sketches of Lithuanian money by artists of that country. About the production of money, negotiations were made with foreign companies.

When the Bank of Lithuania was established on March 1, 1990 and Lithuania's independence was restored on March 11 the Bank organized groups of specialists for different questions of money reform. It was decided to let a French company Francois Charles Oberthur print the litai. Projects of litai banknotes created by Lithuanian artists for this company are shown, also for the first time projects with indicated places where security devices of the notes were to be applied are shown.

When the negotiations with the French company broke off, the government commission in its November 17 meeting decided to have the notes printed by the U.S. Banknote Corporation. Corrected projects of litai notes were sent to the U.S. The Exposition shows projects of notes according to which this company printed litai of the 1991 edition, trial sheets, computer trial pieces (distribution of different colors), production devices of notes of 1991 and 1993.

When the Lithuanian financial economy was touched by the hyperinflation of the ruble in the summer of 1991, the Bank of Lithuania put into circulation general talonai which were used along with the rubles to obtain the most required industrial goods. From the general talonai



2000 500 Litų Banknote



2000 100 Litų Banknote

trial sheets produced by Spindulys print shop in Kaunas can be seen that it was intended to call them bonds. On May 1, 1992 the talonai were placed into circulation, replacements of the rubles which circulated along with the rubles until October 1 when the Republic of Lithuania introduced talonai as temporary money and rubles were taken out of circulation. The talonai became the legal means of payment, the national monetary unit. The obverses of different nominals of talonai showed plants, the reverses, animals. For the first time are shown projects, plates, prints of 1992 and 1993 talonai.

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LITHUANIAN NUMISMATIC DICTIONARY

By
Jonas K. Karys 50.



English translation by
V.L.G. Matelis

Continued from last issue....



Senato mon. pavyzdžiai: smulkesnė Tiberijaus, stambesnė Galbos.

SENOVĖS LIETUVIŲ PINIGAI/Old Lithuanian Money. 1. A. All pre-coin Lithuanian means of exchange (see amber, necklace, mink, kapa). II. Oldest Lithuanian Money. B. Coins of the Lithuanian Grand Dukes and of the Grand Duchy, from the 14th to the 18th centuries. (See II, A survey of Historical Lithuanian Money). 2. The illustrated work of Jonas K. Karys, 6 x 9 ", 396 pages, printed in the U.S. in 1959, which can be found in many libraries.

SENOVĖS MONETA/Ancient Coins. In general, any coin issued up until 500 A.D. Occasionally, in writing and in speech, "ancient" coins are also applied to coins of the middle ages, and even coins of later times, when they are prepared by older, more primitive methods.

SESTERICIJA/Sestertius. (Semis tertius, two and a half). In the third century B.C., a Roman coin of 2.5 Asas was introduced, valued at 1/4 of a denar. At the start, it was of silver, but during the times of the emperors it was struck in bronze. It contained the symbol II, S, meaning two and a half. In the days of Augustus, it became the basic Roman coin in place of the old As, at that time equalling 4 Asas. It was widely known by the name of "nummus," but was called the "Grand bronze." The striking of the sestertius was discontinued in the second half of the 3rd century, A.D., and by degrees it disappeared from circulation.

SEVSKO ČECHAS. A 17th century billon coin of Moscow, issued to replace the Polish-Lithuanian paltarokas, used then in the Ukraine. When, by the peace of Andrusov in 1667, part of the Ukraine, from the Dniepre to the East, was detached from the joint Polish-Lithuanian state and given over to Moscow, the paltarokas, very popular in the Ukraine, was difficult to the Russians to remove from circulation. After 20 years of all types of wiles, officials from Moscow attempted deceit. In 1686-87, they placed into circulation coins expressly struck for this territory (with no validity to use elsewhere) very similar to the beloved paltarokas, changing only the governmental insignia and the names and titles of the rulers. Even the inscriptions were to serve the deceit, they were written in the Latin script. The Ukrainians had designated the paltarokas a "Czech" (an echo of Czech grosh). Since this substitute for the original "Czech" that was offered by Moscow was struck in the city of Sevsko (in the state of Orlo), the substitute quickly gained fame in the peoples language as the "Sevski Czech." However, the Sevski Czech issued in place of the Paltarokas proved to be very deficient, none desired to accept it in exchange for the old, accustomed coin. Finally, the Russians yielded. In 1687, by decree of the Czar, the Sevsko Czech was withdrawn and the old Czech, paltarokas, as left to remain, as is, in circulation. Only after a much longer period was Moscow able to pick the Republics paltarokas out of circulation and substitute their own coins.



A, Žyg. Vazos "paltarokas". B, padid. SEVSKO ČECHAS, kurio vienoj pusėj įrašyti Regentės Sofijos globojamų rusų abiejų carų — Jono ir Petro Aleksejevičių — vardai (inicial. IAPA) ir jų titulai, antroj — "MON(eta) NOV(a) FACTA SIEVA 1686".

SIDABRAS/Silver. (Symbol Ag or Ar, from the Latin argentum). A white, shining, soft (2, 3-3 hardness) ductile, malleable precious metal, series #47, atomic weight 107.88, comparative weight 10.5. Melts at 960.5 Cent. temperature, boils at 1980 C. Found in minerals and in a pure state. Silver is used in chemistry, ornamentation, photography, in the electric industry, and in many other production fields, but is by far better known as a monetary metal. Silver coins were and continue to be produced in almost all countries, and for that reason, generally were and continue to be used up to 33% of its entire production. Because of its softness, silver is not used in its pure state, but in conjunction with other metals in coinage production, most often with copper. A silver-copper mixture is hard, strong and lasting. To describe such an ingot and mark its constituency, a scale of 1000 is used. If in it for example, there is a mixture of 90% silver and 10% ligature, we have 0.900 fineness of silver. If only 75% is silver, the fineness is 0.750, etc. There is also another scale, 900, 750, 600, 550, etc. high purity silver is used to produce the larger coins. A lower standard is used for subsidiary coins. When there is less than 50% silver in an ingot, such an ingot is called billon, and the coins struck from it are billon coins.

SIGLOS (Greek, Shekel). A silver Persian "dareika," equalling 1.20 of a gold dareika.

SIMBOLIS/Symbol. 1. An actual or composite sign, an emblem of an object or idea, a principle or belief, e.g. a cross representing Christianity. A dove- peace; an eagle, thirst for freedom; a heart, love; an anchor, hope; alpha and omega, signs of the beginning and the end; the letters Au, Ar, Cu symbolically express gold, silver, copper. 2. A secondary figure on a coin, ordinarily found (and placed) likewise in the field, next to the principle figure.

SKAITMENYS IR SKAIČIAI/Digits and Numbers. In numismatics, they were and continue to be different in various places, and are not utilized everywhere uniformly. The numismatist-student must interpret and understand them most accurately. To the maturing numimatist, the charts given below will be helpful. The chart shows figures of various languages and epochs.

I.											
Mūsū ...	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Arabū ..	◊	↑	۲	۳	۴	۵	۶	۷	۸	۹	۱۰
Persū ..	◊	↑	۲	۳	۴	۵	۶	۷	۸	۹	۱۰
Kimū ...	令	一	二	三	四	五	六	七	八	九	十
Siamo ..	○	㊀	㊁	㊂	㊃	㊄	㊅	㊆	㊇	㊈	㊉
Indū ...	०	१	२	३	४	५	६	७	८	९	१०

Kitos dvi lent. — žr. psl. 156-157.

SKATIKAS. A synthetic monetary noun, by which in former years certain foreign coins were called in Lithuania. A. Russias Czars 1/2 kopeck, a small copper coin or "Denezka," of nominal value. B. Russian groshes of Poland and Poland-Russia, of the 18th-19th centuries. C. The 100th part of the Ostmark, or pfennig, which by decree of the Lithuanian government of February 26, 1919 was called a "skatikas." There was no coin of the value of a pfennig in the Ostmark standard. It is unknown, how and when this word crept into the Lithuanian language. Likewise unknown is whence it came. The Gothic skatts; Old Norman scot, scatt; Saxon skatar, and perhaps from these, the Slavic skotik and szkojec rose. In the monetary dictionary of the historic Grand Duchy, the word "skatikas" did not exist. Its root, "skat," had no connection in the original Lithuanian language with any of our historical coins.

SKERSMUO/Diameter. A line drawn through the center of a circle. A coins diameter.

Continued next issue...

DID THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA STRIKE GOLD COINS?

By Stasys Sajauskas. Koleckija, Nr. 2, 1995.

8. Translated by Algirdas Kepalas

Grand Duke of Lithuania Sigismund August first struck Lithuanian gold coins at the Vilnius mint in 1547 (3.5 gr. 23.5 carat, fineness .980 golden florin/ducat). Since then the striking of gold coins became a tradition which was continued by almost all of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania.

Stephan Bathory, Sigismund Vasa, and John Casimir. Especially remarkable was Sigismund Vasa (1588-1632) who struck uncommonly many gold coins of 1, 3 (trial piece), 5 and 10 ducats values which, it appears, fulfilled not so much the coin function as were symbols of the greatness of the ruler. This can particularly be said of late coins of high values of 5 and 10 ducats.

Was the Republic of Lithuania (1918-1940) successful to preserve the tradition of striking gold coins?

The law of the Republic of Lithuania accepted in 1924 says that "coins will be struck from gold, silver and copper-aluminum alloy. The 2nd paragraph of the law determines that "every citizen has the right to present gold to the Treasury of the State to strike coins; for the striking of gold coins a tax determined by the Minister of Finance to cover the cost of the production will be collected." And finally, paragraph 5 pronounces that "gold coins will be struck as 50 litų coins, 7.5231 grams of pure gold of 8.3592 gram weight." Thus the fineness of the coins was to be .900.

Thus the legal basis for striking of gold coins was established, but it is not known that such coins had been struck. The striking stage was not reached, not because of the lack of gold, or of prospective buyers. As it is, there has not even been an approved project of a golden 50 litų coin. It has not even been created. In the Numismatic Section of the Čiurlionis Museum of Art there is a model of a 50 litų gold coin, started but not finished by Juozas Zikaras. There is an example of both sides of a 21 cm. diameter coin in plaster on wooden boards. The obverse appears to be completed. It shows a seated woman leaning on a shield with a Cross of Vytis and holding a flag in her hand. As her head is crowned and the crown is in the shape of the Gediminas Castle, the woman represents Lithuania. Around it is the inscription LIETUVOS RESPUBLIKA, and underneath, the year 1926. The unfinished reverse shows a ploughman, but his horse lacks the bridle and guidelines. Missing also is the value of the coin (50 litų).

The model was shown in the 2nd exposition of Lithuanian numismatics in Kaunas at the National M K



Čiurlionis Museum of Art, organized to commemorate 70 years since the declaration of Lithuania's independence. The model of the coin is shown on the poster of the exposition.

Here is another interesting story. In 1938 Lithuania's Mint directed by Jonas Kareckas in Kaunas on Miško Street was striking the commemorative 10 litų coins for 20 years of independence of Lithuania. The obverse of the coins (project of J. Zikaras) was showing President Antanas Smetona. Employees of the Mint conceived an idea to strike a single golden copy of the commemorative coin and to present it to the then President of Lithuania Antanas Smetona as a souvenir of this important national event. Mint employees collected sufficient money to acquire necessary gold and carried out their plan. They presented a 10 litų silver coin and its golden copy in a special box to the President. This was described in the

COIN CELEBRATES INDEPENDENCE ANNIVERSARY

The Bank of Lithuania issued a .925 silver proof 50 litų coin on March 6, 2000 to commemorate ten years of the restoration of Lithuanian independence. The coin is 38.61 mm. in diameter and weighs 28.28 gr. Mintage: 3,000. Issue price at the Bank of Lithuania: 90 litai (U.S. \$23).

The obverse features the Vytis emblem in the center. The top legend reads, "LIETUVA," and the bottom, "50 LITŲ." The Lithuanian mintmark "LMK" appears on the left in front of the hoofs of the horse.

The reverse features the Lithuanian Statue of Freedom (designed by Juozas Zikaras) in the center, with sun rays shining forth. The legend reads, "NEPRIKLAUSOMYBĖS ATKŪRIMAS 1990-2000" meaning "Restoration of Independence 1990-2000." The initials of the designer Gediminas Karalius "GK" (Looks like GH) appears on the bottom to the left of the statue pedestal.

The edge of the coin is inscribed "LAISVĖ-AMŽINOJI TAUTOS VERTYBĖ," meaning, "Freedom is an Eternal Wealth of a Nation."



9.

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GOLD COIN (Continued from pg. 8...)

daily Lietuvos Aidas. But alas, further fate of this golden coin is not known.

An intriguing story about the plans to strike Lithuanian gold coins is told by the Presidents aid (1927-1937) Colonel Tadas Šakmanas. While smaller democratic countries of Europe were losing their independence one after the other, Lithuanias higher government circles realized that although Lithuania declared its neutrality, it would hardly avoid its annihilation. Therefore it was considered what to do with Lithuanias gold to avoid its seizure by the aggressor. One of the considered possibilities was to strike gold coins in order to distributed among Lithuanias people and making it their wealth and leaving it in the hands of those who through their labor had amassed this noble metal. But this proposal was rejected when it was understood that Lithuanias would probably not benefit from their coins for they would be bought up by craftier and richer foreigners.

Thus the Republic of Lithuania 1918-1940 did

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10. ABOUT BANK CHAIRMAN REINOLDIJUS ŠARKINAS



The signature on several current banknotes of the Bank of Lithuania is that of the Chairman of the Bank, Reinoldijus Šarkinas. The two new banknotes, 100 and 500 litų which are being released this year will also bear his signature.

Here is a biography of Šarkinas with photograph, provided to us by the Bank, and also by Tony Grina.

Date of birth: July 16, 1946. Lithuanian. Married, two children. Knows Lithuanian, Polish, Spanish, Russian, and English. 1968 graduate of Vilnius University, Labor Economics.

Šarkinas has been Chairman of the Bank of Lithuania since February, 1996. 1995-96 Minister of Finance. 1992-1995 member of the the Board of the Bank of Lithuania. 1990-1995 Deputy Minister, Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Lithuania.

During the Soviet Occupation era: 1982-1990, deputy head, head of the Board of Culture and health care, finance director of the budget department, ministry of finance. 1980-82. Financial advisor in the ministry of education to Cuba. 1972-1980, deputy head of the board of financial planning, head of the financial accounting department, head of the board of financial planning at the ministry of education. Head of personal sales at the "Spindulys" manufacturing enterprise.

EXPOSITION, from page 5...

On June 14, 1993 according to the decision of the Litas Committee, litai and centai were placed into circulation on June 25. The exposition shows the litas notes of all nominals of 1991, 1993, 1994, 1997, and 1998 printed by the U.S. Company U.S. Banknote Corporation, British company Thomas De La Rue & Co. Ltd., and the German company Giesecke & Devrient GmbH., as well as the projects of 500 litai printed by the latter company and of 100 litai printed by the Swiss company Orell Füssli Security Printing Ltd. For the first time are shown the means of production of Lithuanian money acquired from the Germany company Giesecke & Devrient GmbH. They are the plates of deep print and offset of the obverse and reverse of the 1997 200 litų and the 1998 50 litų.

The exposition has given much space for the projects, models, means of production of Lithuanian circulation and commemorative money. Part of the coins 10, 20, 50 ct. and 1, 2, 5 litai were struck in England and on September 30, 1992 the Lithuanian Mint started striking 1, 2, and 5 centai circulation coins. Presently the Lithuanian Mint strikes all Lithuanian coins. Beyond the approved projects, models of coins are shown for the first time, and shows material about the creation of money and of the competitions for production accumulated in the Bank of Lithuania during the last decade. The exposition was arranged by Vidmantas Laurinavičius.

FOOTNOTES from page 9...

1. Dukša Z. Monetos pasakoja. – Vilnius, 1991. – P. 182.
2. Steżyński-Bandtkie K. W. Numizmatyka krajowa. – Warszawa, 1839. – P. 71.
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4. Kopicki E. Ilustrowany skorowidz pieniędzy Polskich i z Polską związanych. – Warszawa, 1995. – Nr. 3228.
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6. Sajauskas S., Kaubrys D. Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės numizmatika. – Vilnius, 1993. – Nr. 690.
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9. Dukša Z. Retos Vilniaus kalyklos monetos užsienio ir Lietuvos muziejuose. (Rankraštis.)
10. Dukša Z. Monetos pasakoja. – Vilnius, 1991. – P. 181.
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12. Sajauskas S., Kaubrys D. LDK monetos. Kainininkas. – Kaunas, 1996. – Nr. 687-691.
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